

BRISTOL

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 2, 2023

1. Call to Order

The four hundred and sixth regular meeting of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees was held on Monday, October 6, 2023, in person at Bristol Community College, Fall River campus, located at 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, in the Hudnall Administration Building (D-209). The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

Trustees present: Joan Medeiros, Chair (remote), Jeffrey Karam, Vice Chair; Valentina Videva Dufresne, Secretary; Renee Clark (remote); John Morris; Lynn Motta; and Todd McGhee.

Trustees absent: Frank Baptista; Pamela Gauvin; Joseph Ferreira; and James Mathes

2. Chair's Remarks

Chair, Joan Medeiros welcomed all to the meeting, and began by thanking everyone for their well wishes and support during her recent medical challenges. She shared that it is hard to believe that it has been six weeks since her medical journey began.

Chair Medeiros congratulated all for a great start to the academic year. She noted great fall enrollment efforts and the roll-out of the MassReconnect program. She stated all would hear more about those efforts later in the agenda.

3. Consent Agenda

Chair Medeiros asked if any Consent Agenda items needed to be moved to the regular agenda. There were no items to move. She then noted the Consent Agenda Items listed:

- Consideration of Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting & Retreat for August 23, 2023
- Report of Personnel Actions September 2023
- Report of Workforce and Community Education Contracts September 2023

Chair Medeiros asked for a motion to approve said Consent Agenda items. A motion was made by Trustee Videva Dufresne to approve the Consent Agenda items and was seconded by Trustee Motta. The motion was approved.

4. Policy Review

Chair Medeiros introduced Emmanuel Echevarria, Chief Human Resources Officer, and asked him to provide an overview of the proposed Anti-Bullying Policy.

CHRO Echevarria began by reminding Trustees they have a draft copy of the proposed Anti-Bullying Policy and the related complaint form in their board materials. He stated it is important for the college to have an anti-bullying policy in

place to promote and uphold the college's values of inclusion and respect, and to protect the safety of all employees, students, and visitors to the college including vendors, consultants, and board members.

The proposed policy defines bullying and provides behavioral examples and evidence of bullying.

CHRO Echevarria noted that employees who feel they have experienced bullying should report this to their supervisor or to Human Resources while students should report bullying behavior to Joe DiMaria in Student Success. Visitors to the college should report bullying behaviors to the Title IX & Equity Compliance Officer.

CHRO Echevarria asked if there were any questions or thoughts. Trustee Videva Dufresne asked about counseling services available to employees and students. CHRO Echevarria confirmed students can be referred to the college's counseling services and employees are encouraged to utilize the college's EAP services. He was also asked what happens if the two parties involved are external to the college. He confirmed in the event of two external parties, the matter would be referred to law enforcement.

CHRO Echevarria once again asked if there were any other questions or discussion necessary. Hearing none, Chair Medeiros requested a motion to approve the Anti-Bullying Policy. A motion was made by Trustee Karam to approve the Anti-Bullying Policy as presented. This was seconded by Trustee McGhee. The motion was approved.

5. President's Report

Chair Medeiros invited President Laura Douglas to provide the President's Report.

- **President's Goals 2023-2024 for Approval**

President Douglas began by describing the layout of the Proposed Key Goals for 2023-2024 document describing four strategies (listed below) with several objectives provided with each strategy highlighting the colleges key goals for 2023-2024. She shared outcomes would continue to be updated until completion is reached throughout the year.

Strategy #1: Academic Innovation: Advance an engaging holistic teaching and learning environment resulting in a seamless student experience that prepares them to embrace life's opportunities.

Strategy #2: Equity and Student Success: Shared responsibility for the success of our students and employees by improving equity-mindedness and ensuring institutional support that lessens equity gaps.

Strategy #3: Organizational Excellence: Create a culture of innovation through improved processes and collaboration, modern technology and ongoing professional development to support student and employee success.

Strategy #4: Partnerships: Collaborate with educational institutions, alumni, industry and community partners to increase educational attainment and support the talent pipeline to enhance opportunities in the region.

President Douglas presented these four Strategies, as well as Objectives and Key Goals with progress on the outcomes to date. Once the presentation of the proposed goals was completed, the President invited Trustee questions and discussion. Student Trustee Morris shared that triage team mentioned in the key goals related to adult learners' technology skills has been so important to many students. The Veterans Center has been specifically working in collaboration with the triage team to assist and advise student Veterans and other adult learners with the two-factor authentication in an effort to retain students.

Once discussion was complete, Chair Medeiros requested a motion to approve the proposed President's Key Goals for 2023-2024. A motion was made by Trustee Karam to approve the President's Proposed Keys Goals for 2023-2024 as presented. This was seconded by Trustee Medeiros. The motion was approved.

- **Community Partnership Highlight**

President Douglas asked Judi Urquhart, Chief Development Officer, to provide an update for the college's partnership with Vineyard Offshore. CDO Urquhart shared Vineyard Offshore has

established a fund through the Bristol Community College Foundation that provides living stipends for Mashpee and Aquinnah Wampanoag tribal citizens who are interested in pursuing either a certificate or an associate degree in Offshore Wind. The stipend amount is \$2,500 per semester and \$5,000 for the full year and complements a separate scholarship fund offered through the Bristol Foundation that covers the tuition of students who are pursuing offshore wind courses.

CDO Urquhart invited questions and also welcomed any future inquiries about this fund.

Trustee Karam left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.; he had previously shared he had a hard stop at that time.

- Trustee Talking Points

President Douglas introduced the three Trustee Talking Points presenters and topics:

- MassReconnect – *Kate O'Hara*, Vice President, Student and Enrollment Services

VP O'Hara provided an update on the impact of MassReconnect on the college's fall semester. She shared that at the end of last week, 617 students have been awarded MassReconnect funds totaling just over \$1 million. She stated the college's overall enrollment of students aged 25+ has increased by 5% from last year and the average age of our students is now 26.4 as compared to 25.4 just one year ago. She noted the college received 1,259 admissions applications from adult students between August 1st and September 5th which was a 235% increase from the prior year.

VP O'Hara then shared with the fall start behind us, the college has shifted focus to spring and fall 2024. She stated the data shows that 14% of applicants start but do not complete the admissions application, so therefore the college updated the application for this next cycle by removing questions that are not relevant to the admissions process, and subsequently cutting down the application completion from ten minutes to five minutes. She shared while the new application has only been open for one business day, the college has already received 80 applications from adult learners for the spring, an increase of 208% from last year at the same time. VP O'Hara shared that an Open House is scheduled for Sunday, October 22nd as well as various College Nights scheduled on evenings and weekends in December and January.

She shared the college continues to adapt our student services models based on the observed needs of our adult learners. VP O'Hara provided examples such as the need for more digital literacy, computer and technology skills support for students returning to the classroom. She shared the college also recognizes the need for more evening hours across all campus locations. VP O'Hara stated the college is actively working on solutions to these identified needs as we shore up our resources in advance of another influx of adult learners in the spring.

VP O'Hara stated the college has already spent 60% (~\$1M) of our state allocation for MassReconnect. She shared the college anticipates exceeding our total award amount by the end of the fiscal year.

- Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Grant – *April Lynch*, Chief of Staff and Strategy Development

Chief of Staff Lynch began by reminding trustees that Bristol Community College has worked in conjunction with the CONNECT Consortium (Massasoit, Bridgewater, Mass Maritime, Cape Cod Community College and Bristol) to develop a grant funded by the Department of Higher Education referred to as the HEIF Grant (Higher Education Innovation Fund).

She shared the purpose of the grant was to identify, develop and support a framework of core equity competencies in support of the DHE's 10-year equity plan. Chief of Staff Lynch stated that the CONNECT Consortium recognized that if we were going to make equity training sustainable, measurable and impactful we needed to define, consolidate and leverage our

combined knowledge. She shared resources were used to create a common glossary, framework and resource center for use to by all partners in the CONNECT Consortium.

Chief of Staff Lynch stated the CONNECT Consortium used research and best practices to develop the framework which has been defined as having five key areas of competency which include Implicit Bias, Stereotypes, Racial Trauma, Culturally Inclusive Learning and Microaggressions.

She shared this equity project was a culmination of a year's work among CONNECT Consortium representative members and will launch both the electronic portal and implementation guide to all consortium campuses within the next week. Chief of Staff Lynch stated Bristol's next step in this work is to identify how to best operationalize this professional development training.

➤ STEM Week – *Adriene Foster Scharf*, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Dean Foster Scharf shared that STEM week is scheduled October 16-20, 2023, and is a statewide initiative happening across the Commonwealth designed to highlight how STEM careers and industry are vital to our economy. STEM Week is a collaborative opportunity to highlight jobs and career pathways. She stated she is thrilled to share that STEM Week 2023 at Bristol Community College has a full slate of fun, educational events at all our college locations including:

Monday, October 16, 11 a.m. – Noon	A conversation with Dr. Timothy Hebert, Brown University, Fall River Campus
Tuesday, October 17, 2 – 3 p.m.	A conversation with Dr. Tammy King, Bridgewater State, Taunton Center
Wednesday, October 18, 10 – 11 a.m.	South Coast Wind Presentation New Bedford Campus
Thursday, October 19, Noon – 1:00 p.m.	STEM Trivia with the Dean Attleboro Campus
Thursday, October 19, Noon – 1:00 p.m.	AIS, Inc presentation with William Byrd, Protected Species Observer, Fall River Campus
Friday, October 20, 1:00 p.m.	Cardboard Canoe Race** Fall River Campus

Dean Foster Scharf reminded all that registration is required, but open to all and invited Trustees to attend any of these exciting events.

***NOTE: Trustee Videva Dufresne shared her team won this contest while she was in college!*

Trustee McGhee asked Dean Foster Scharf if the college offers computer programming and coding (Python, C++, etc.). She shared that the college offers both an Associate's degree and a certificate program.

- Financial Update

President Douglas asked Steve Kenyon, Vice President, Administration and Finance, to provide a financial update for the college.

VP Kenyon shared that the college's FY23 audit concluded late last week and our draft financial statements went to the Finance and Budget Committee for their review over the weekend. We will have a meeting later in the week so they can vote on the statements and then they will go to the full board at the December meeting. At that meeting a partner from Withum will be in attendance to do the required communications to the Board of Trustees.

Some big picture items VP Kenyon thought would be important to share include:

- Just over \$1M in invoices for cyber-attack reimbursement are still under review by the insurance company. Our agent has been very helpful in advocating for us and remain confident we will be paid relatively soon up to our policy limit of \$1M.
- There has been very little activity on the related cyber-attack class action lawsuits. The four suits have been combined into one federal case.
- The college hopes to have some resolution on both insurance matters in the coming months
- We budgeted fall enrollment to be 8% lower than last year and all indications are we will do much better than budget which takes some pressure off the finances.
- As reported by VP Kate O'Hara earlier, MassReconnect has yielded over a \$1M in revenue for the fall semester and expect to do at least that again in the spring.
- We are still awaiting funding for collective bargaining increases but are prepared to implement those shortly after funding is received.

VP Kenyon stated he was sure Trustees have been hearing and reading about the Federal Shutdown. He shared it could have a big impact on the college so we have developed a contingency plan that was approved by the state last week. He shared we now have until November 17, 2023, as a Continuing Resolution was passed this weekend and we have a plan to use College Trust funds to avoid any disruptions to our workforce. Historically, the last four shutdowns were 3, 16, 21 and the longest was 35 days. VP Kenyon shared his hope a shutdown can be averted, or if one happens, it will be less than one month. He stated that for any duration longer than one month we would have to revisit our strategy.

VP Kenyon thanked the Trustees for their time and invited any questions related to the college's budget or finances.

6. Human Resources Employee Exit Data, Recruitment, and Retention Strategies (presentation)

Chair Medeiros invited Emmanuel Echevarria, the college's Chief Human Resources Officer, to provide a presentation on the college's employee exit data, recruitment, and retention strategies.

CHRO Echevarria stated his presentation would cover:

- a. Factors that influence the college's ability to recruit and retain employees
- b. Information we learn from exit interviews as college employees leave employment
- c. How the college is responding to data collected and emerging trends
- d. Strategic and proactive plans for retention and recruitment of employees

He stated "our why" is people, and acknowledged human capital is essential and its availability is influenced by societal and economic factors. Examples of these influences include the great resignation within higher education, the continued enrollment declines, and the significant increase in inflation and cost of living. CHRO Echevarria provided pertinent articles linked to these examples. These articles were included in Trustee meeting materials.

Next, CHRO Echevarria shared exit interview feedback was collected in one of two ways – online anonymously or at in person HR meeting. He shared:

- Anonymous participants made up 9 out of 45 responses
- Out of the 36 participants who opted to identify:
 - ✓ 22 (61.1%) were Non-Unit Professionals
 - ✓ 8 (22.2%) were members of AFSCME
 - ✓ 6 (16.67%) were members of MCCC
- Most participants who were not anonymous identified as Female (72.2%)
- There is no race data associated with this survey.

He also shared the top ten reasons for voluntary separation with “Career Advancement” being the #1 reason for this attrition. The 5 most reported causes for separation totaled 58% as follows:

- Career Advancement: 15%
- Retirement: 12.5%
- Poor Working Environment: 12.5%
- Lack of Advancement Opportunity: 9.2%
- Quality of Supervision: 9.2%

Grouped together career and compensation concerns were a critical factor for 43% of participants. Culture was the second biggest grouping (35%) defined by work environment, supervisors, and telework.

Opportunities for retention of employees indicated satisfaction in 5 categories: mission, work engagement, student success, relationship with management, and employee benefits.

Despite relatively high scores throughout the Exit Interview process, the areas of opportunity for the college include:

- promoting a positive culture
- improving compensation practices
- backfilling vacant positions
- improving the hiring process to address capacity issues

CHRO Echevarria reflected on the exit interview data stating the primary goal is to understand and influence attrition. This is a challenge as highlighted by the attrition factors mentioned earlier. CHRO Echevarria also noted the current assessment tool, while useful in capturing baseline data, leaves some gaps in our ability to fully understand the contributing factors for employee departures and demographic information that may better identify trends. He shared the current tool was kept to have a full year of baseline data, but will be redeployed to help improve the collective understanding of the employee experience at Bristol Community College.

Next, CHRO Echevarria presented a Strategic Retention and Recruitment Plan. The clear priorities based on feedback include:

- Compensation practices, specifically where the college has control, should be reviewed to remain competitive with other employers, industries.
- Employees are seeking professional pathways to grow their careers at Bristol first, and are looking for the professional development necessary to grow with the organization.
- Employee engagement and recognition efforts are valued by the Bristol Community, and more opportunities to acknowledge the meaningful contributions of staff to promote a positive work environment.
- Fully transition Human Resources from a transactional operation into a strategic organizational development service that supports the betterment of employees at every level.

CHRO Echevarria shared Human Resources has engaged employees directly as well as through union leadership, and plans on increasing feedback loops to better understand employee experiences throughout the college. He stated these proactive approaches have already led to positive changes including: increasing training opportunities; updating telework practices; providing open feedback sessions; working to obtain employee training and professional development platform through LinkedIn Learning; identifying employees who are seeking promotional opportunities; and changing compensation processes for Non-Unit Professionals (NUPs).

The college’s Human Resources team has identified several opportunities and priorities:

- Improve Hiring Outcomes and Processes
- Recruit Top Talent
- Create Professional Development Pipelines
- Retain and Promote Employees

Related interventions, metrics, and outcomes were shared for each of these identified HR priorities.

In conclusions, CHRO Echevarria asked Trustees what are some successful recruitment and retention strategies have you seen or heard about that could be replicated at Bristol Community College? Several questions or thoughts were mentioned by Trustees including:

- a. Formal employee mentoring program
- b. Employee career development emphasis
- c. Develop pay scale trajectory
- d. Explore employee engagement tools such as “Stand-Out” ([link](#)) which is being used at Southcoast Hospitals to “force” dialogue between employees and supervisors
- e. Random employee recognition – “...catching folks doing it right”
- f. Leadership team members visibility and walking around to engage employees more naturally

CHRO Echevarria thanked Trustees for these timely and useful ideas, and concluded the presentation.

7. Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative Presentation (MAICEI) (presentation)

President Douglas introduced Paul Correia, Director of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Direct Support Certificate Program and the MAICEI Programs, and Ross Hooley, the college’s MAICEI Coordinator, and invited them to conduct a presentation for the Trustees.

Director Correia thanked the Trustees for this opportunity to highlight MAICEI and asked Coordinator Hooley to provide a brief program overview. Coordinator Hooley shared that since 2019 Bristol Community College has partnered with seven surrounding schools and the Department of Developmental Services. The program participant number has doubled since inception in 2019; from 6 students in 2019-2020 to 13 students in 2023-2024.

Coordinator Hooley shared that MAICEI students have enrolled in a wide variety of classes at Bristol:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • College Success Seminar | • Digital Photography |
| • Electronic Game Development | • Hardware Fundamentals |
| • College Writing | • Visual Arts Colloquium |
| • Acting: Voice, Movement and Style | • Basic Computing Skills |
| • Guiding Young Children | • Introduction to Theatre |
| • Television Production | • Computer Aided Drafting |
| • Applied Animal Behavior | • Theatre Colloquium |

He shared their enrollment has been instrumental in making college more accessible to these students.

Trustee Motta asked about participation of New Bedford public schools as they seem to be missing from the list presented. Coordinator Hooley said there have been challenges making in roads with NB public school participants but they were continuing to attempt to build that relationship. Trustee Motta shared she sits on a school committee in NB and would be happy to assist with a possible connection.

Coordinator Hooley stated he had a seven-minute video to highlight the program. Based on technical challenges and time constraints, that MAICEI video ([link](#)) will be emailed to the Trustees with copy to Director Correia and Coordinator Hooley.

8. New England Commission of Higher Education Standards (NECHE) (presentation)

President Douglas shared that in preparation for the NECHE site visit this spring, March 24-27, 2024, she and the Leadership Team wanted to prepare Trustees over the course of the next few board meetings. President Douglas stated that each Trustee has a NECHE folder/notebook, where once completed, Trustees will have a significant resource to utilize.

President Douglas shared that at each board meeting, Trustees will participate in this guided process. While we will capture the discussion, she invited Trustees to take their own notes as we individually examine each Standard. She shared

we will collect notebooks for all at the end of each board meeting leading up to the site visit. At each meeting we will cover related questions and discussion topics that may arise for each of the nine NECHE Standards. Each page will introduce a specific Standard, provide examples of what we hope Trustees see, and then, ultimately ask Trustees what they actually see and cite the evidence to support the claim.

President Douglas stated that today we will take a closer look at Standards 1-3:

- ❖ Standard One: Mission and Purposes
- ❖ Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation
- ❖ Standard Three: Organization and Governance

President Douglas lead the Trustees through a guided discussion of each Standard (1-3) while Chief of Staff, April Lynch, took notes on the evidence discussed for each NECHE Standard.

Some of the evidence, the Trustees noted included:

- President's key goals align with college's mission, vision, values as well as DHE; EX: equity agenda
- Progress of strategic initiatives and key goals reviewed at each board meeting.
- Efforts to ensure Trustees know and understand how college is supporting students, employees, and economic development in the area.
- Knowing how the college's mission align with the Department of Higher Education goals and initiatives.
- The Trustees' committee structure also aligns with this work; EX: creation of risk management committee
- Trustees are involved in both long-term planning and shorter-term college operational decisions
- Many channels for communication – open board meetings; presentations by college community members; monthly news clippings and current events; Bristol Weekly; enrollment reports
- Talking Points and discussion at each meeting
- Policy Review
- Joint meetings with Foundation Board of Directors
- Financial input and transparency – fees, audits, finance committee deeper dive
- Alignment of budget with student needs and the necessary programs

President Douglas thanked the Trustees for their discussion and investment in the NECHE preparation process. She reminded them to leave their NECHE notebooks to be collected and redistributed at the next board meeting on November 6th where Andrew Fisher, Vice President, Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer, has been asked to review Standard 4: Academic Program, with the Trustees.

9. Old Business

Chair Medeiros shared the calendar for upcoming priority and optional events for Trustees was available. She noted a few minor corrections or updates, and told the Trustees that Board Liaison, Poudrier-Aaronson would edit and make the calendar available to all.

Chair Medeiros then invited Chief Development Officer, Judi Urquhart, to provide an update regarding the Tableside Dinner event. CDO Urquhart stated this event was a fundraiser for the Culinary Arts Program at the college and invitations would soon be sent exclusively to Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board of Directors to attend the dinner on Friday, November 17, 2023. She then highlighted the amazing menu slated for the event.

10. New Business

Chair Medeiros asked if there was any new business to discuss.

Trustee Morris indicated he had two quick items to share:

- Ms. O'Hara and I are working together to create more transparency with students
- Trustee Morris shared the Student Veteran's Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C is scheduled for the week of October 16-20. He noted some colleges and universities might send 1-2 students; this year seven student

Veterans from Bristol CC will attend this Institute which is indicative of our student Veteran involvement on campus. He noted the college would be well represented in Washington, D.C.

11. Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Medeiros called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee McGhee made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Clark seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.